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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic

I. Introduction

1. This report is submitted pursuant to the request of the Security Council contained in a statement made by its President on 26 September 2001 (S/PRST/2001/25) in which the Council requested me to continue to keep it regularly informed of the activities of the United Nations Peace-Building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) and the situation in that country. The present report covers the activities of BONUCA and new developments in the Central African Republic in the political, security, military, social and economic spheres since my last report dated 2 January 2002 (S/2002/12). The report also addresses developments in the field of human rights and in relations between the Central African Republic and certain neighbouring countries.

II. Political situation

2. The shift towards a civil tone in political discourse, that emerged in late 2001, has been considerably enhanced. The gradual trend towards the restoration of trust and calm led to a positive development in the relations between the Government and the opposition and to the return of a considerable number of civilian and military refugees. Thus, following President Patassé's appeal for the return of refugees on 31 December 2001, and with the assistance of BONUCA, three members of Parliament from the Rassemblement Démocratique Centrafricain, the party of former President Kolingba, who had taken refuge in the Democratic Republic of the Congo following the failed putsch of 28 May 2001, returned to Bangui and resumed their seats in the National Assembly. Three hundred and seven Central African military refugees also returned to their country and reported to the Office. Many other Central African civilian refugees also followed suit.

3. The completion of the trial for the attempted coup d'état of 28 May 2001 would have no doubt helped to ease the political tension caused by the political and military unrest of 2001. The trial had commenced on 15 February 2002 and was public but had been interrupted on 12 March 2002 because the defence attorneys had withdrawn in protest against the fact that one of their colleagues had been barred from appearing in court. The trial, which was adjourned until the next session of the criminal court, could resume in June 2002.

4. The political dialogue which BONUCA helped to start is continuing. The first meeting of the political parties and members of Parliament, organized by the Office on 18 and 19 February 2002, led to a rapprochement between the majority and the opposition. A second meeting is scheduled for 14 and 15 June 2002 to consider this process. President Patassé has not yet granted an audience to the opposition leaders. However, most of them agreed to accompany him in April on his trips to the northern region of the country (to allay the concerns of the population over the continuing insecurity), to Ndjaména (for his meeting with President Déby) and to Malabo (for the laying of the foundation stone for the Parliament of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) of which he is the Chairman-in-office).

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5. However, some differences remain between the Government and the opposition which, moreover, remains divided over the issue of a possible rapprochement with President Patassé. One of the biggest points of discord is the holding, towards the end of 2002, of municipal and regional elections. The opposition is of the view that the conditions have not been met for the holding of elections and criticizes the Government for failing to involve it in the preparations for such elections. For their part, the Central African authorities are determined to live up to the commitment made by the Head of State in his new year's message with respect to the holding of elections. That is why they are currently conducting a voter registration process while at the same time approaching many donors for possible financial assistance for the holding of the election, which is estimated to cost 4.5 billion CFA francs. Meanwhile, both the opposition political parties and the majority party are riven by internal discord.

6. The Government is concerned over the plight of hundreds of military returnees who are viewed as deserters and will most likely not be reintegrated into the army, in which case they would pose a threat to peace and stability in the country. That is why BONUCA is exploring, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Central African authorities, possibilities for the socio-economic reintegration of such returnees so that they are not tempted, as a result of inactivity, to try to subvert the institutional order once again.

III. Security and military situation

7. There has been a relative improvement in the security situation in both Bangui and the provinces. Thus, the curfew that had been in force since the attempted coup d'état of 28 May 2001, was lifted for good on 9 May 2002. However, there is still some insecurity (armed robbery and sporadic shots at night in Bangui, activities of highway robbers in the interior) in the country mainly because of the proliferation of light weapons. Consequently, under the leadership of BONUCA, a disarmament operation was launched on 23 January 2002 with help from UNDP and in liaison with the Government. To date, 9 heavy weapons, 681 light weapons, 1,167 grenades, 94,263 rounds of ammunition, 8 shells, 37 rockets, 890 magazines and 5 sets of transmission equipment have been recovered. A formal arms destruction ceremony will be held on 13 June 2002.

8. Most of the refugees returned following the gradual improvement in the security situation. Thus, about 600 of the original 1,250 soldiers registered at the Bokilio camp (Democratic Republic of the Congo) reportedly remain there. As far as the civilian refugees are concerned, the majority of them have been transferred to the Molé camp in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 44 kilometres from Bangui. The others preferred to go to Bétou in the Republic of the Congo. All in all, 7,000 of the approximately 23,000 Central African refugees who originally went to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, are reported to remain in that country.

9. Concerning the deployment in the Central African Republic of the force of the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), it should be noted that, in addition to the deployment of approximately 100 Libyan troops under a bilateral agreement, a 50-man Sudanese contingent has been in Bangui since January 2002. A Djiboutian contingent of about 50 men arrived in the Central African Republic in February 2002. A 165-man contingent from Burkina Faso is scheduled to arrive in October 2002.

10. The study on the harmonization of the various initiatives taken at the regional level to restore calm and stability in the Central African Republic (the Khartoum and Syrte CEN-SAD initiatives, the Libreville and Brazzaville CEMAC initiatives, the Tripoli initiative of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)), requested by the Security Council in the press statement made by its President on 10 January 2002 (SC/7262), is being carried out. I will make my recommendations to the Security Council in that regard in due course.

11. As far as the restructuring of the armed forces is concerned, the BONUCA military team continues to give technical advice to the Central African military authorities. In January and February 2002, the team, together with UNDP and the Ministry for Restructuring, helped to draw up a plan of action covering training and rehabilitation of the infrastructure of the restructuring programme. This programme can still not be implemented because of a lack of funding. That is why I once again urge those partners who have made commitments in this regard to honour them.

12. Concerning activities geared to the Central African armed forces, the Office organized from 12 to 15 March 2002, in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and in partnership with the Central African Ministry of Defence, a training seminar on a culture of peace for military personnel. The seminar brought together 250 military staff of all grades. The training was part of a vast campaign to enhance awareness of the culture of peace initiated by BONUCA in March, April and May 2002, which covered Bangui, the Sibut and Bambari regions situated in the centre of the country, 180 kilometres and 380 kilometres respectively, from Bangui, and Bouar, 450 kilometres to the west of the capital.

13. The BONUCA civilian police team continues to monitor the security situation of returnees to Bangui for whom it provides accommodation facilities as or when necessary. In the area of training, this team organized a training course on investigation techniques in February and March 2002 for the Central African police and another course in May 2002 on the enforcement of economic and financial rules and regulations. Another course on the maintenance of law and order was also organized in June 2002 for the Central African gendarmerie.

IV. Social situation

14. The Central African Republic is still facing the problem of salary, pension and scholarship arrears. As at 30 April 2002, without taking into account the 12 months of salary arrears inherited from the Kolingba regime, the situation was as follows: 14 months of arrears for police officers; 16 months for armed forces personnel; 18 months for public officials. However, since January 2002, the Government has paid three to four months of salaries from its own resources.

15. The climate of peace currently prevailing in Government/labour relations remains fragile because of the continuing salary crisis. Workers continue to respect the truce signed with the authorities since last year, which was renewed on 22 March 2002 with the signing, in the presence of BONUCA, of a codicil to the joint Government/trade unions communiqué of 6 March 2001.

16. The monitoring and arbitration committee established under the terms of that communiqué has resumed its activities and should soon carry out an evaluation on how both sides are fulfilling their commitments. It should be noted that trade union leaders, who had fled the country following the failed putsch of 28 March 2001, have all returned to Bangui.

V. Economic situation

17. The economic situation continues to give cause for serious concern. The Central African Republic still does not have a formal cooperation programme with the Bretton Woods institutions. Until 31 March 2002, it only had a reference framework for six months. Following the most recent Government mission to Washington from 8 to 19 April 2002, which was led by the Central African Prime Minister, a review meeting was held in Paris on 29 May 2002. The Government is optimistic that an agreement will be reached soon. The case of the Central African Republic should come before the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in early July 2002. Under the most optimistic scenario, the initial disbursements could not be made before the third quarter of 2002.

18. The Central African Republic has not received any budgetary aid since January 2001. The country's serious financial difficulties, caused by this situation, could undermine the labour truce. I have remained in contact with the IMF and World Bank authorities to prevail upon them to take into account the special circumstances of the Central African Republic and provide it with the assistance it needs.

VI. Human rights situation

19. The overall human rights situation has been primarily characterized by the commencement of the trial of the alleged instigators of the failed putsch of 28 May 2001. About 700 persons were to appear before the Criminal Court, 628 of whom failed to appear. Exceptionally, the session had been postponed until 30 March 2002 to bring the trial to completion. On 8 March 2002, the Criminal Court ordered that Mr. Zarambaud (counsel for 59 persons accused of involvement in the failed coup) should be removed from the case because of his possible involvement in the attempted coup d'état. That removal, which was deemed arbitrary by the Central African Bar Association caused all the counsels in the case to

withdraw as a group. That unusual situation led to the interruption of the proceedings, which were thus postponed until the next session of the Court.

20. The Criminal Court nevertheless found Colonel Georges Touaguendet, former deputy chief of staff of the territorial army, guilty of the murder of two adolescents whom he had shot down in July 2001. The accused was sentenced to 20 years of forced labour and the payment to the civilian parties of damages and interest in an amount of 40 million CFA francs. This sentence was criticized by public opinion, which regarded it as a lenient verdict.

21. During the period under review, on 2 May 2002, the independent deputy Hilaire Sébalet, who had been imprisoned for criminal complicity since 1998, was released by the Bangui court of appeals. This individual, who had not been able to sit in Parliament since his election, has just taken up his seat in the National Assembly.

22. While extrajudicial executions have declined considerably, they have not actually stopped. On 19 January 2002, at Bossangoa (in the north), two people were shot down by soldiers. This act followed an uprising of the inhabitants who were protesting against the execution of a citizen by a soldier a few days earlier. The phenomenon of popular justice continues to hold sway in rural areas.

23. Obstacles to freedom of assembly and/or freedom of association were reported during the period under review. The Rassemblement Démocratique Centrafricain, the main party of the parliamentary opposition, which was suspended in June 2001, has still not resumed its activities, although the legal period of suspension of three months expired long ago. Similarly, a meeting for the political return of the opposition party Mouvement Démocratique pour la Renaissance et l'Évolution de la Centrafrique, planned for 9 February 2002, was prohibited, as well as that of a moderate opposition party, Parti Social Democrate, planned on 2 March 2002, since the Minister of the Interior considered that it was not a good time to organize meetings and other political gatherings.

24. Since there are no prisons in Bangui, offices of the gendarmerie, police stations and/or offices of the survey, research and documentation section attached to the Presidential security unit continue to be used as ad hoc detention centres. The BONUCA human rights team visited detention centres in Bangui and in the provinces in April and May 2002 and met over 350 detainees. In general, the conditions of detention are still extremely worrying because of overcrowding and the lack or chronic absence of food, sanitary facilities or medical care. Nevertheless, with a view to rehabilitating the prisons and making them more humane, material and financial assistance has been provided by the Catholic church, particularly in Bouar and Bangassou, situated in the west and east respectively.

25. The legal system is still facing serious difficulties. This situation is particularly apparent in the provinces where, in the absence of judges, some administrative authorities are taking the place of judges and issuing judicial decisions. Even more frequently, in remote regions, the single judge system leads to a concentration of power. Indeed, in some sub-prefectures, a single judge is at the same time examining magistrate, prosecutor and presiding judge, which is detrimental to respect for human rights.

26. In the context of its mission to contribute to national capacity-building in the area of the promotion and protection of human rights, BONUCA, in partnership with the Ministry of the Interior, the municipality of Bangui and the mayors' association of the Central African Republic, organized in Bangui, from 26 to 28 February 2002, a national training seminar on human rights, designed particularly for mayors and district heads. In the provinces, the Office continued its training activities for law enforcement officers, including police officers and gendarmes. In May 2002, this training took place in Bangassou and involved law enforcement officers of the Mbomou prefecture (in the east).

27. Furthermore, training in human rights and in international humanitarian law was provided to 19 Central African soldiers, members of the rapid deployment group responsible for the security of United Nations personnel in the Central African Republic. The objective was to transmit knowledge about national and international legal instruments so that they would better respect human rights in the fulfilment of their tasks in the field.

28. BONUCA is continuing its awareness-raising activities in the area of human rights through the dissemination of radio programmes on national radio and private stations. Moreover, the information unit of the Office is working to make the role and activities of

BONUCA more visible and is also maintaining its support for the media of the Central African Republic. In this respect, it organized, in June 2002, a training session on conducting an audio-visual debate and another session for press attachés.

29. In the context of strengthening the activities of the Office, which I had recommended in my report of 21 September 2001 (S/2001/886), and which the Security Council had accepted on 26 September 2001 (S/PRST/2001/25), a regional branch of the human rights section will open on 15 June 2002 in Bouar (450 kilometres to the west of Bangui). This decentralization of activities in the area of human rights will make it possible to publicize and disseminate the fundamental principles of human rights within the country and ensure judicial assistance for the victims of human rights violations.

VII. Relations between the Central African Republic and Chad

30. In order to promote the normalization of relations between Chad and the Central African Republic, the deterioration of which had contributed to sharp tensions on the border between the two countries since November 2001, President Patassé visited Ndjaména on 10 April 2002.

31. The Head of State of the Central African Republic had made a visit earlier to the northern region of the country, particularly the towns of Batangafo and Kabo, to reassure the villagers who had been the victims of atrocities, fires and looting. He was accompanied, on this occasion, by opposition leaders, and by my Representative at Bangui, the representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the representative of the World Food Programme.

32. The meeting between President Patassé and President Déby helped reduce tension between their two countries, since the two Heads of State decided on an immediate opening of the borders and a meeting of the border administrative authorities. They also decided to establish a joint ministerial commission responsible for investigating the question of tension on the border. This ministerial commission met at Ndjaména from 13 to 17 May 2002.

33. At the end of their meeting, President Patassé reaffirmed that the Bozizé affair is not a political problem and that the former Central African chief of staff may safely return to Bangui if he wishes. As to President Déby, he said that Mr. Bozizé, Mr. Miskine (a Central African/Chadian national in the service of President Patassé) and Mr. Djembété (a Chadian opposition figure who has taken refuge in Bangui) should go back to their respective countries.

34. It is very unlikely that Mr. Bozizé will agree to return to Bangui in the current situation. He is persisting in his demands, including the restoration of his grade, repair of his residences and security guarantees. The Bozizé problem therefore remains intact and, until an appropriate solution is found, the long-term normalization of relations between the Central African Republic and Chad could take more time than envisaged. Conciliation efforts are continuing, however, particularly in the context of CEMAC, at the level of the ad hoc committee of heads of State to promote a resumption of the political dialogue in the Central African Republic, the presidency of which is held by President Bongo.

VIII. Relations between the Central African Republic and Cameroon

35. The Security Council will recall that in February and March 2001, acute tension developed between the Central African Republic and Cameroon concerning the border between these two countries. Following a fact-finding mission initiated by BONUCA, the tension had eased and the two parties had agreed to convene their joint commission for cooperation, in particular to consider the demarcation of the border. However, the attempted coup d'état of 28 May 2001 and the ensuing disturbances made it impossible to hold the meeting.

36. The joint commission for cooperation between the Central African Republic and Cameroon held its tenth session at Bangui from 2 to 4 May 2002. It decided to revitalize and strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries and agreed on the demarcation of the common border, and the placement of markers along it.

IX. Observations

37. I should like to stress that, since my last report of 2 January 2002 (S/2002/12), the overall situation in the Central African Republic has developed favourably in many respects. The indefinite lifting of the curfew, the return of a large number of refugees, the continuation of social dialogue between the Government and the trade unions, and the start of political dialogue between the Government and the opposition, are tangible signs of this. These efforts should be encouraged, since they could be jeopardized if they are not supported.

38. The difficult economic and financial situation of the Central African Republic is liable to shatter the social truce. On its expiry, on 22 July 2002, the workers are not excluding the possibility of resuming social protests, which would threaten peace and stability. It is therefore important for the Government to be able to ensure the regular payment of salaries, as agreed under the terms of the joint communiqué signed with the trade unions. To this end, the Central African Republic should have access to external financial assistance, which has been lacking since January 2001. It is for that reason that I once again invite the authorities of IMF and the World Bank to take into account the special circumstances of this country and rapidly conclude a cooperation programme. I also encourage the authorities of the Central African Republic to continue the reforms recommended by the Bretton Woods institutions and the actions to stabilize public finances.

39. The extremely volatile nature of the situation in the Central African Republic must be borne in mind. The accumulation of salary, pension and scholarship arrears, latent social tension, and the antagonism in the relations between the majority and the opposition create conditions which could lead to all kinds of disintegration.

40. Beyond the recurrent financial difficulties experienced by the Central African Republic, the situation of military returnees is also a serious cause for concern, as I stressed above. In order to maintain peace and stability in the country, an appropriate solution must be found to the fate of the soldiers who will not be reintegrated into the army. It is for that reason that I am making an advance plea to the donors and partners of the Central African Republic to provide financial assistance to the socio-economic rehabilitation programmes that will be formulated for the benefit of former military personnel.

41. I congratulate President Patassé on the initiatives which he has already taken to facilitate the political and social dialogue, and encourage him to meet the opposition and trade union leaders, as he has promised. My Representative, General Lamine Cissé, and BONUCA, will continue their efforts in this respect.

42. As indicated above, the Central African Republic has tried to improve its relations with its neighbours in recent months. This normalization is likely to create a calmer atmosphere in the country, which should enable the authorities to continue their efforts for national reconciliation and the restoration of lasting peace. It is also clear that, in view of the complexity of the geopolitical realities of the Central African Republic, lasting peace and tangible progress can be achieved only through cooperation and mutually beneficial relations in the subregion. I therefore once again encourage the leaders of the subregion to pursue their efforts to build trust and promote constructive links with each other.

43. In conclusion, I should like to pay tribute to my Representative, General Lamine Cissé, and all the personnel of BONUCA, who, along with the personnel of the United Nations system in the field, are continuing, with courage and dedication, to make a commendable contribution to the efforts being made by the Government and people of the Central African Republic for the consolidation of peace.

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General Assembly
Fifty-seventh session
Items 30, 36, 37, 57, 67, 74, 76, 96, 103, 162 and 163 of the preliminary list*

The role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order

The situation in the Middle East

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula

General and complete disarmament

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

Globalization and interdependence

International drug control

Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-seventh year

Letter dated 14 June 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Declaration by the heads of State of the members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, signed in St. Petersburg on 7 June 2002 (see annex).

* A/57/50/Rev.1.

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On behalf of the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of the member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and as the representative of the country where the meeting took place, I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 30, 36, 37, 57, 67, 74, 76, 96, 103, 162 and 163 of the preliminary list, and also of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sergey Lavrov

Annex to the letter dated 14 June 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian and Chinese]

Declaration by the heads of State of the members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Today we, the heads of State of the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan, solemnly signed the Charter — the basic constituent document of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). This event marks the creation of the legal foundation for a new international association, the establishment of which we proclaimed in June 2001 in Shanghai.

We believe that the establishment of SCO is in keeping with the actual situation in the region and in the world, and also corresponds to the fundamental interests of the peoples of the six countries.

I

SCO is the successor of the "Shanghai Five" and was established on the basis of two agreements, which were innovative for the Asian continent, on confidence-building measures in the military sphere and on arms reductions.

SCO was established in order to strengthen mutual trust, friendship and good-neighbourliness between the member States, consolidate multilateral cooperation in the maintenance and strengthening of peace, security and stability in the region, jointly counteract new challenges and threats, encourage effective and mutually advantageous cooperation in various spheres, and promote economic growth and the social and cultural development of the member States.

SCO is based on the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders, non-interference in internal affairs, non-use of force or threat of its use, and equal rights of all member States.

II

The rapid fulfilment of the procedures for the ratification of the SCO Charter and the Agreement on the regional counter-terrorist structure of SCO will contribute to the early launching of all the mechanisms designed to ensure the effective functioning of SCO.

The national coordinators of SCO are instructed, without waiting for the completion of all the domestic procedures for the entry into force of the SCO Charter, to proceed to prepare the range of contractual and normative texts regulating the procedure for the work of the SCO organs and other aspects of its activity.

Within the framework of SCO, active steps will be taken to implement the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, and to adopt appropriate texts on multilateral cooperation in curbing illicit narcotics and

arms trafficking and other types of criminal activity of a transnational character, and also illegal migration.

The establishment of a mechanism for the mutual exchange of information and for seeking joint positions on foreign policy issues of mutual interest, including issues arising within international organizations and forums such as the United Nations, is of current significance.

We note with satisfaction that along with the solution of organizational issues, the process of the development and institutionalization of cooperation among member States on specific topics in various fields is under way. We greatly value the outcome of the first meeting of heads of Government of the SCO countries on 14 September 2001 in Almaty and the meetings of Ministers for Foreign Affairs on 7 January 2002 in Beijing and 26 April 2002 in Moscow, and we support the development of contacts between defence, foreign policy and border departments, directors of law-enforcement bodies and special services within the framework of the "Bishkek Group", ministries of culture, emergency services and other governmental structures. We agreed to continue the gradual expansion of areas of cooperation between the SCO member States.

We believe that the development of economic partnership is a particularly important goal in the work of SCO. To this end, the negotiating process will be intensified on issues of the establishment of favourable conditions for trade and investment and the formulation of a long-term programme of multilateral trade and economic cooperation in accordance with the Memorandum between the Governments of the SCO member States of 14 September 2001. In the near future, it will be necessary to determine priority projects for practical cooperation in such spheres as building transport links and energy projects, water use, obtaining and transporting energy resources, and also other spheres of mutual interest.

III

The SCO member States are developing their relations within the framework of the evolving multipolar system of international relations and believe that the world order in the twenty-first century must be based on mechanisms for the collective solution of crucial problems, the supremacy of law and the gradual democratization of international relations.

The SCO member States will make efforts for the prevention and peaceful settlement of international conflicts associated with inter-ethnic, inter-faith, territorial, political and other differences, in strict accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law.

The SCO member States intend to increase cooperation with each other and with other countries in the search for answers to the challenges of the process of globalization, neutralization of its negative aspects and possible risks, and preservation of the variety of forms of economic, social and cultural development. Globalization and the national interests of States are not mutually exclusive, but mutually enhancing structural elements of the developing world order. The international community needs to work out security concepts of a new type, based on the principles of mutual trust, mutual advantage, equality and cooperation, contributing to a radical weakening of the factors undermining security, and the eradication of sources of new threats.

The SCO member States are resolved to intensify cooperation in combating terrorism, separatism and extremism, organized crime, illicit trafficking of narcotics and psychotropic substances, and also weapons. They regard these phenomena as transnational threats, which can be effectively tackled only through the organization of collective efforts by the international community.

The SCO member States firmly reject all acts, methods and practices of terrorism. The struggle against terrorism must be waged on the basis of the norms and principles of international law, must not single out any religion or individual countries or ethnic groups, and must be devoid of bias and double standards.

The SCO member States believe that it is necessary to create a global system to deal with new threats and challenges, with a central coordinating role for the United Nations and its Security Council, which would include appropriate multilateral mechanisms for cooperation covering early warning and prevention of emerging threats and a decisive and adequate response to such threats. For actions in this area, it is crucially important to formulate principles within the framework of the United Nations and also a clear, universally binding international legal basis for counter-terrorist activities which would not allow for dual interpretation and would not serve as a cover for interference in the affairs of other States and infringement of their sovereignty.

The Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism of 15 June 2001, and also the Agreement between the States members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on the regional counter-terrorist structure, of 7 June 2002, represent an important contribution to these efforts and create clear legal parameters for the development at the regional level of practical cooperation in combating terrorism, separatism and extremism.

The SCO member States are convinced that an important part of global counter-terrorist efforts should be to deprive terrorism of its social foundation, including the eradication of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and discrimination on racial, ethnic and religious grounds.

The SCO member States support each other's efforts to eliminate the manifestations of terrorism, separatism and extremism, and also the steps taken by the international community to close off the channels of financing of terrorist activity, and will intensify their own efforts to prevent the preparation and financing of acts of terrorism in their own territories and deny refuge to terrorists.

The SCO member States confirm their intention to do everything possible to help strengthen the role of the United Nations in international affairs and further enhance the effectiveness and authority of the Security Council, which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The SCO member States believe that the observance of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime is one of the most important elements of ensuring peace and security both in Asia, and at the global level. The early accession of all countries to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and also the signing and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by States which have not yet done so, will help strengthen strategic stability at various levels.

The SCO member States support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including the initiative of the Republic of Uzbekistan to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

The SCO member States stress their respect for and support of the non-nuclear status of Mongolia.

The SCO member States welcome the conclusion of a new treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America concerning further major reductions in strategic offensive weapons, and regard this as a positive contribution to the reduction of nuclear weapons.

The SCO member States call for an early start to the multilateral negotiations on the preparation of a comprehensive agreement on the non-emplacement of weapons in outer space, and the non-use of force or threat of its use in relation to space targets.

The SCO member States, committing themselves to act in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, confirm the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights and also their obligations to observe human rights and fundamental freedoms, consider peace and development to be the basic guarantee of the promotion and protection of human rights, and oppose the application of double standards in human rights issues and interference in the internal affairs of other States under the pretext of protecting them.

IV

The SCO member States have the inalienable right to choose freely the forms and methods of ensuring their security, including the development of cooperation with other States. They will follow this policy in such a way as not to cause negative consequences for regional stability and security.

The SCO member States consider that the security of Central Asia is inseparably linked with the prospects of the peace process in Afghanistan. In this connection, they will intensify cooperation with each other in promoting the post-war political and economic recovery of this country.

The SCO member States welcome the establishment of a new, stable Afghanistan, free from terror, war, drugs and poverty, and declare their respect for the cultures and traditions of all peoples inhabiting that country. They are prepared to promote the process of the establishment of a broadly representative government in the interests of the entire Afghan people.

The SCO member States wish to see the Asian and Pacific region as a zone of peace, stability and joint prosperity, and are prepared to cooperate constructively with all States and regional associations in establishing a cooperative system of security throughout the region, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, taking into account to an equal degree the interests and approaches of all participants. The strengthening of the mechanisms of multilateral cooperation which have already proved their worth, such as the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum and others, will contribute to the establishment of such a system.

The SCO member States believe that the Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legitimate Government representing all of China, and that Taiwan is an inseparable part of the territory of China.

The SCO member States support the efforts of the two Korean States to develop and expand dialogue and cooperation in the spirit of the agreements of the inter-Korean summit meeting in June 2000 and believe that it is useful to develop dialogue and constructive cooperation between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the United States of America and other countries of the West in order to achieve lasting peace and stability on the Korean peninsula.

The SCO member States call upon India and Pakistan to resume political dialogue in order to banish tension and develop cooperation between the two countries.

The SCO member States express deep concern about the protracted crisis in the Middle East, which is having an adverse effect on regional and international security and stability. The SCO member States call upon Israel and Palestine to proceed immediately to implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, respond positively to the peace-keeping efforts of the international community, and resume the search for peaceful ways of resolving the dispute.

The SCO member States are prepared to continue political and diplomatic efforts together with the international community in order to ensure the full implementation of all the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council on the Iraq question.

The SCO member States commend the initiative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to convene the Conference on cooperation and confidence-building measures in Asia and believe that this forum, along with the existing structures and mechanisms in Asia, will play an important role in raising the level of mutual trust and the development of multilateral cooperation among the Asian countries.

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We confirm that SCO is not a bloc or a closed alliance, is not directed against individual countries or groups of States, and is open to broad cooperation with other States and international associations in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law, on the basis of mutual interests and commonality of approaches to resolving regional and worldwide problems.

(*Signed*) **Jiang** Zemin
President of the People's Republic of China

(*Signed*) N. A. **Nazarbaev**
President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

(*Signed*) A. A. **Akayev**
President of the Kyrgyz Republic

(*Signed*) V. V. **Putin**
President of the Russian Federation

(*Signed*) E. S. **Rakhmonov**
President of the Republic of Tajikistan

(*Signed*) I. A. **Karimov**
President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

St. Petersburg, 7 June 2002